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Transform ex-mining land to preserve endangered flora, fauna

IN A move to preserve endangered flora and fauna, it is imperative that former mining areas in the country be transformed into green areas, says an environment and ecology expert. Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) ecophysiology branch head Dr Ang Lai Hoe said there were about 70,000ha of ex-mining land in Peninsular Malaysia which could be transformed. Land transformation was the reclamation, rehabilitation and restoration of former barren land into a productive land through scientific and technical improvements, he told *Bernama* in an interview in Kuala Lumpur recently. "Today, large areas of our forest are inevitably lost due to massive development and conversion into housing, industrial and agricultural purposes. Consequently, some of our floral and fauna biodiversity of the forest may be extinct," he said yesterday. Citing an example in 2011, Ang said FRIM had successfully established a model of man-made forest on a former landfill and flood mitigation site under a consultative project with the Drainage and Irrigation Department at Ara Damansara Eco Park. "This was the first project in Malaysia where we grew rainforest on a landfill site and flood mitigation area," he noted. — *Bernama*